



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Bill Opens The Door To Help Rural Libraries

PATTY RITCHIE June 7, 2017



The State Senate has approved a bill, sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie, to help smaller, mostly rural libraries tap into available funding to expand and improve their facilities.

The bill (S.3022) would allow small libraries to join together and bundle projects to meet state requirements for low-cost bonding through the Dormitory Authority.

“Libraries all across the state face significant needs to upgrade and improve their facilities to better serve a growing number of library patrons,” said Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate’s Committee on Libraries.

“This year, we were able to increase funding for library capital projects, but many small, rural libraries are finding they can’t access the funds because of current rules that set a \$5 million minimum on amounts that they can borrow.

“This bill simplifies the rule and makes sure that the funding is available to every library, including those that need it most.”

Earlier this week, Senator Ritchie hosted a meeting of the Senate Libraries Committee at which Senators were told of the growing need, especially among smaller libraries, for construction and improvements to meet the needs of patrons and expansions to meet increasing demands for services.

The meeting featured presentations by Iris Weinshall of the New York Public Library and Angela Newman, representing the North Country Library System. Video of the meeting can be found on Senator Ritchie’s website and at:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/calendar/meetings/libraries/june-06-2017/libraries-meeting>

Last month, Senator Ritchie announced that libraries in her district would receive more than \$450,000 in public library construction funds to make upgrades to their facilities. The funding is part of a \$19 million capital fund appropriation in the 2016 State Budget for construction and renovation of public libraries and public library systems in New York State. In addition, included in the new State Budget was more than \$95 million in overall funding for libraries across the state, as well as \$24 million for important library capital projects and upgrades.

The bill was sent to the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Tom Abinanti.

*(Attn. photo editors: Pictured in the above photo from left to right at this week’s Senate Select Committee on Libraries Meeting are Senator Joseph Addabbo, Senator Kathy Marchione, Angela Newman of the North Country Library System, Senator Patty Ritchie, Iris Weinshall of the New York Public Library, Senator Brad Hoylman, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky and Senator Patrick Gallivan)*